

Applic. No. 10/799,098
Amdt. dated September 17, 2007
Reply to Office action of July 16, 2007

Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-9 and 12-16 remain in the application. Claims 1 and 12 have been amended. Claims 10 and 11 are being cancelled herewith.

In item 1 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-3 and 6-16 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Heine et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,522,388) (hereinafter "Heine") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

In item 2 on page 5 of the Office action, claim 16 has been rejected as being fully anticipated by Heine (U.S. Patent No. 4,522,388) under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and as a whole, the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references. However, claim 1 has been amended to reflect limitations in independent claims 6 and 16.

Accordingly, the Examiner is kindly requested to enter the amendment to claim 1.

Applic. No. 10/799,098
Amdt. dated September 17, 2007
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Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, *inter alia*:

reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the overlapping stream by lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet.

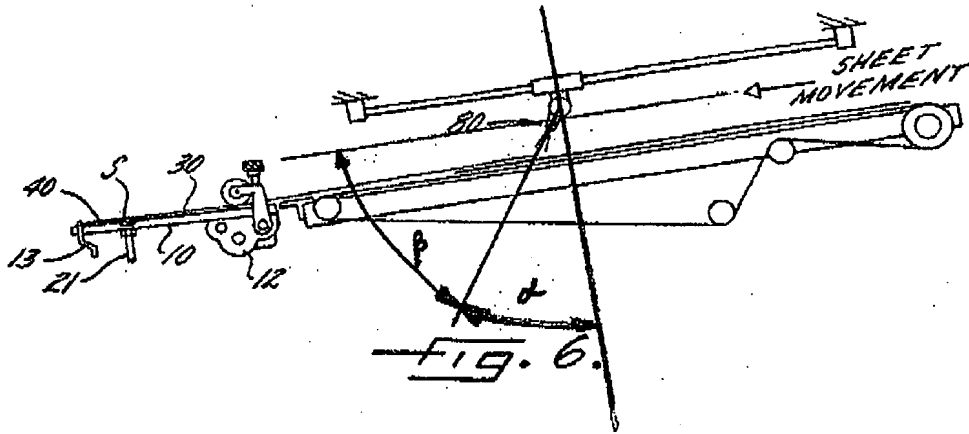
The Heine reference discloses a sheet feeding assembly for overlapping sheets. An auxiliary blower (80) is located above a feed table behind the rear edge of the first sheet. Heine discloses that rear edge of the first sheet comes into the range of the blower (80) and is subject to an air blast therefrom which passes as a film beneath the tail of the first sheet separating the first sheet from the next sheet. Heine shows in Fig. 6 that the blower (80) is directed obliquely to the sheets and the sheet transport direction. See the marked up Fig. 6 of Heine provided below, showing the angle β between the blower blast and the tangential direction of the sheets and the angle α between the blower blast and the orthogonal to the sheet transport direction. The angle β is far greater

Applic. No. 10/799,098

Amdt. dated September 17, 2007

Reply to Office action of July 16, 2007

than the angle α . Therefore, the air blast is not substantially tangential to the sheet transport direction.



As seen from lines 3-10 on page 8 of the specification, the method of claim 1 of the instant application lifts the first sheet by blowing air over the top of the sheet thereby creating an "aerodynamic paradox" effect, the sheet trailing edge is lifted and thus separated from the following sheet lying underneath.

The reference does not show reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the overlapping stream by

Applic. No. 10/799,098
Amdt. dated September 17, 2007
Reply to Office action of July 16, 2007

lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet, as recited in claim 1 of the instant application. The Heine reference discloses that a blower that is directed obliquely to a sheet. The blower creates an air film underneath a first sheet. Heine does not disclose that the blower creates a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over a first sheet. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, which recites reducing an adhesion force between two sheets following one another in the overlapping stream by lifting a sheet trailing edge of a first sheet with a blown air jet aimed in the sheet transport direction blown out substantially tangentially over the first sheet.

Since claim 1 is allowable over Heine, dependent claims 2 and 3 are allowable over Heine as well.

The following further remarks pertain to claims 6 and 16.

Claims 6 and 16 call for, *inter alia*:

the lifting device disposed above the first sheet of the overlapping stream, the lifting device being an air jet aimed

Applic. No. 10/799,098
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in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream.

On pages 3 and 5 of the Office action, the Examiner alleges that Heine discloses "the lifting device (including 80) disposed above the first sheet of the overlapping stream, the lifting device (including 80) being an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction (sheet movement arrow in Fig. 6) substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream."

It is respectfully noted that the Examiner is in error. Particularly, Heine explicitly discloses when the sheet reaches the front stops, it is subject to an air blast therefrom which passes as a film beneath the tail of the first sheet, separating the first sheet from the next sheet so that the next sheet is not entrained (column 6, lines 54-60). Fig. 6 of Heine explicitly shows that the air blast is oblique to the sheets being transported (see Fig. 6 of Heine provided above). Therefore, Heine discloses that a blower provides an air blast oblique to the sheets, which creates a film beneath the first sheet. Heine does not disclose air jet disposed above the first sheet of the sheet stream aimed in a direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet in an overlapping sheet stream. Therefore, it is respectfully noted

Applic. No. 10/799,098
Amdt. dated September 17, 2007
Reply to Office action of July 16, 2007

that the Examiner's allegations pertaining to an air jet in Heine, are not accurate.

As seen from the above given remarks, the reference does not show the lifting device disposed above the first sheet of the overlapping stream, the lifting device being an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream, as recited in claims 6 and 16 of the instant application. The Heine reference discloses that a blower creates an air blast that is oblique to a sheet transport direction. Heine does not disclose a lifting device being an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, which recites that the lifting device is disposed above the first sheet of the overlapping stream, the lifting device is an air jet aimed in a sheet transport direction substantially tangentially over the first sheet of the overlapping stream.

Since claim 6 is allowable over Heine, dependent claims 7-9, and 12-15 are allowable over Heine as well.

In item 3 on page 6 of the Office action, claim 4 has been rejected as being obvious over Heine (U.S. Patent No.

Applic. No. 10/799,098
Amdt. dated September 17, 2007
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4,522,388) and further in view of Jeschke (U.S. Patent No. 4,886,261) under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Jeschke does not make up for the deficiencies of Heine. Since claim 1 is allowable, dependent claim 4 is allowable as well.

In item 4 on page 7 of the Office action, claim 5 has been rejected as being obvious over Heine (U.S. Patent No. 4,522,388) and further in view of Schwebel (U.S. Patent No. 3,624,807) under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Schwebel does not make up for the deficiencies of Heine. Since claim 1 is allowable, dependent claim 5 is allowable as well.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1, 6, or 16. Claims 1, 6, and 16 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 6, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-16 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone

Applic. No. 10/799,098

Amdt. dated September 17, 2007

Reply to Office action of July 16, 2007

call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,


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